

**JAMES PHYFE SNEDEKER**

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Dear Chairman DeFronzo, Chairman Guerrero, Ranking Member Boucher and Ranking Member Scribner and other distinguished members of the Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of SB 434 B AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISPOSITION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OF LAND ORIGINALLY ACQUIRED FOR THE "SUPER 7" HIGHWAY.

The issue of Super 7 Highway from Norwalk to the Danbury line is a 50 year old controversy that has been shelved by the state at this time for the following reasons.

1. 40% of the land needed for the construction of the highway is not currently owned by the state and will need to be acquired before any construction could take place.
2. The highway will impact 2 major sources of water in the region, the Sugar Hollow aquifer and the Cannondale aquifer.
3. A Supplemental Federal Environment Impact Statement ("SEIS") is required before any construction can begin and most feel that there are very strong grounds for this not being granted.
5. Environment groups and local town opposition including Ridgefield , Redding , Wilton and parts of many surrounding towns, continue to have very strong injunctive grounds for stopping any construction.
4. Based upon current engineering cost indices for a 17.1 mile long highway, including 100 foot high fly overs and significant rock cutting, the cost of the highway will exceed \$1.8 Billion.
5. At a traffic design speed of 45 MPH for an upgraded existing Route 7 vs a design speed of 60 MPH for the Super 7 Highway, the travel time from Norwalk to Danbury will be reduced by 5.5 minutes if the Highway is ever built. *(How can anyone serving in any fiduciary capacity justify spending more than \$1.8 Billion and impacting 2 major sources of water just to save 5.5 minutes travel time?)*

6. When one considers that there is an existing underutilized railroad line that parallels the existing Route 7, that there are prudent and feasible alternatives to building the new highway, and the huge price tag for Super 7, one can only conclude that supporting this bill is the only way to proceed.

Due to the above, it makes to give our State' DOT more flexibility in the use or disposition of this land which has been restricted for many years by providing enabling language to Section 1. Section 13a-85b of the general statute. Under this the DOT may, or may not, sell or use this land according to the times or needs of the state at some future date. It is vital that we do not tie the hands of our government during these difficult times when change is quickly occurring on many different fronts.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my testimony.

*Jim Snedeker*

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